

February 14, 1969

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Dear Tom:

I certainly agree with you about the shrillness of the followers of Rachel Carson. In fact, I have to say that for a rather long time I was so turned off by that hysterical level of reaction that I refused to give very much thought altogether to the possible substance of their concerns.

At this point I think we end up talking about rather different things. It would be preposterous to outlaw DDT. But I do not believe that we can blind ourselves to the increasing abuse, particularly in large scale, wide area application programs of an agent whose persistence in the environment is quite remarkable and which does appear to be showing a build-up that would be alarming even if one had absolutely no indication of possible harmful effect.

If the analytical data on the distribution of DDT are themselves open to question, then I would hope that you can bring your expertise to bear on this and change our whole outlook on the question.

I do not think that I stated in my column that there was any immediate anxiety about reproduction in man, and that is not my concern about the kinds of DDT levels that would be in prospect for the next few years in the absence of any prohibition. I agree with you about the import of the general toxicity data on this score, although I think one would have to keep careful watch of possible genetic variation in DDT susceptibility, as has already been demonstrated in barley. I am concerned about the phenomena that Conney has reviewed, which open up the likelihood of some unexpected interactions between exposure to DDT (and a variety of other substances! I am against smoking, too.) and the variety of drugs that ^{are} commonly used these days.